
Prescription Pills



Prescription Pills

Street names: Benzos, OC, Oxy, Percs, T-3, T's & R's

Which prescription pills are typically misused?

Opioids (used to treat pain):

- hydrocodone (Vicodin)
- oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet)
- morphine (Kadian, Avinza)
- codeine (Tylenol with Codeine No. 1, 2, 3, 4)
- fentanyl (Duragesic Mat)



Benzodiazepines (used to treat anxiety and panic attacks):

- diazepam (Valium)
- clonazepam (Klonopin)
- alprazolam (Xanax)



Stimulants (used to treat Attention Deficit Disorder):

- dextroamphetamin (Dexedrine, Adderall)
- methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta)



What does misusing pills look like?

- Taking more medication than what is prescribed
- Changing how the medication is taken (snorting or injecting)
- Taking other people's medication
- Taking pills to feel 'high'
- Using medications with alcohol or other substances
- Seeking prescriptions from different doctors or 'double doctoring'





Risks of Misusing Prescription Pills



Opioids

- When opioids are used regularly and for a long time the body develops a tolerance, meaning more and more is needed to feel the same effects.
- Reducing or stopping opioid use may cause withdrawal symptoms - restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea and vomiting.
- Opioids have an increased risk of overdose - even one large dose can be dangerous.

Benzodiazepines

- Using benzodiazepines regularly can make your body become dependant on them.
- Reducing or stopping use can cause withdrawals and seizures.

Stimulants

- Using stimulants regularly can lead to tolerance and dependence on them.
- Misusing stimulants can lead to feelings of hostility, paranoia and psychosis.
- High doses may cause dangerously high body temperatures and an irregular heartbeat.
- There is also a risk for heart failure or seizures.

Prescription Pills and Pregnancy

Not much is known about the effects of many medications taken during pregnancy.

The effects of a medication depend on:

- How much medication is taken
- When during the pregnancy the medication is taken
- The health of the woman
- Other medications being taken

If a medication is being prescribed to treat a health condition, it may be safer to continue taking it during pregnancy.

This is why it is important to talk to your doctor if you become pregnant and are taking any prescription pills or over-the-counter medications.

Taking some drugs (like opioids and benzodiazepine) near the time of delivery may cause the baby to have withdrawal once it is born.

Babies experiencing withdrawal may need to be observed after birth or get treatment.





Prescription Pills and Breastfeeding

Most medicine is passed into breastmilk.

Talk to your health care provider about any prescription pills you are taking to make sure they are safe for your baby.

If you are taking opioids prescribed by your doctor, it is safe to breastfeed your baby as long as you only take the amount prescribed and only take it for as long as prescribed.

Take your pain medication after you breastfeed so that less passes to your baby.

Some benzodiazepines are not recommended during breastfeeding because they stay in the mother's body for a long time. This may cause the baby to be very sleepy, have poor latching, and low energy.

Some stimulants may be ok while breastfeeding, if taken as prescribed by your doctor.

Talk to a health care professional if you have any questions or concerns.



Prescription Pills and Parenting

As a parent, you are responsible for children in your care.

You can take steps to make sure they stay safe.

- Keep medication in a safe place, such as a tall locked cabinet
- Put medication in containers with child-resistant caps
- Keep track of medications by counting the pills in each package
- Make sure nobody else has taken out refills at the pharmacy in your name
- Return unused or expired medication to the pharmacy
- Talk to your teenage children about the risks of prescription pills
- If a child takes prescription pills by accident and is unconscious call 911 immediately! If the child is awake, call the Poison Centre at 1-855-776-4766.

Supporting Women On Their Journey

Partners, families, and friends can support women to not misuse prescription pills during their pregnancy by:

- Being caring and non-judgemental
- Not sharing your medications, even if she is prescribed the same one
- Reducing some of her stress (ask her what would help)
- Recognizing her efforts and celebrating small successes





What can I do if I misuse prescription pills?

It may be a struggle to quit prescription pills, but every little step you take helps you and your baby. Steps could be to:

- Talk to your health care provider about treatment options
- Avoid alcohol and other drugs while using prescription pills
- Take care of your health

Taking care of yourself also helps take care of your baby.

Here are some things you can do:

- Attend your prenatal appointments
- Be active when you can, rest when you need
- Eat foods that you like that have lots of nutrients - vegetables and fruits, milk or milk alternatives, whole wheat grains, fish, meats and alternatives
- Drink lots of water
- Cut down or quit smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol
- Reduce stress - talk with a friend, take a bath, go for a walk



You Are Not Alone!



Where To Find Help

There are lots of places that offer support and treatment.

Speak with a worker about which one may be right for you.

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM).....	204-944-6200
AFM Women's Centre and Family Program.....	204-944-6229
Aboriginal Health & Wellness.....	204-925-3700
Behavioural Health Foundation.....	204-269-3430
CARI-Clearview Addiction Rehabilitation Institute.....	204-784-2840
Insight Mentoring Program.....	204-925-3750
Klinic Crisis Line (24 hour).....	204-786-8686
Manitoba Addiction Treatment Centres.....	204-582-9050
M.I.N.E. Methadone Intervention and Needle Exchange.....	204-944-6200
Mothering Project, Mount Carmel Clinic, Intake Line.....	204-479-0203
Native Addictions Council of Manitoba.....	204-586-8395
OATS-Opiate Addiction Treatment Services, Intake Line.....	204-509-6410
Salvation Army- Anchorage Program.....	204-946-9401

